

PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING AN INITIAL LICENSE TO OPERATE A FAMILY CHILD CARE CENTER

1. Determine the need for the program you are considering. Involve other agencies and members of your community. Use the information you gather to decide what kind of program you will offer. Contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency for detailed information for your area. The Wisconsin Child Care Resource and Referral Agency listing is enclosed.
2. The Wisconsin Statutes exempt certain family day care centers from local zoning ordinances. Check with your local municipality to determine whether your family day care center will be exempt according to this law or whether you will need to obtain a local zoning permit to operate. Specifically, s. 66.1017, Wis. Stats., reads as follows:

Family day care homes. (1) In this section:

- (a) "Family day care home" means a dwelling licensed as a day care center by the department of health and family services under s. 48.65 where care is provided for not more than 8 children.
- (b) "Municipality" means a county, city, village or town.
- (c) No municipality may prevent a family day care home from being located in a zoned district in which a single-family residence is a permitted use. No municipality may establish standards or requirements for family day care homes different from the licensing standards established under s. 48.65. This subsection does not prevent a municipality from applying to a family day care home the zoning regulations applicable to other dwellings in the zoning district in which it is located.

3. Read and study the enclosed "HFS 45 Licensing Rules for Family Day Care Centers for Children."
4. Complete the enclosed form "Family Child Care Business Start-Up Worksheet" and send it to the Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project (WCCIP) at:

WCCIP
P.O. Box 369
Hayward, WI 54843

The WCCIP will assign a child care technical advisor (TA) to help you prepare for an initial licensing study. Because there are certain rules that must be met before a license can be issued, your WCCIP TA will provide a checklist that identifies those items. The TA will complete the checklist during a visit with you and will detail those items that you will need to complete before you submit the application for a license. **(NOTE: Your WCCIP TA is not a Department licensing specialist and does not have the authority to issue you a license. The TA will provide information and assistance to help prepare you for the initial licensing study and will provide an application for a license upon completion of the technical assistance.)**

5. If your family day care center will be located in **a building that is not a one or two-family residence**, you will need to ensure that the building meets the Wisconsin Commercial Building Codes. A building inspection conducted by one of the following is required:
 - ◆ A certified building inspector from a city certified by the state to do inspections (The WCCIP TA has a list of certified cities).
 - ◆ A Wisconsin registered architect or engineer (registered in accordance with Wisconsin Administrative rules A-E for Architects and A-E 4 for Engineers).
 - ◆ A commercial building inspector certified by the Department of Commerce in accordance with Comm 5, Credentialing Code. Individuals falling into this category might be self-employed, employed by a municipality that is not on the list of certified cities or employed by a private independent inspection firm. See "Building Inspection Services" in most telephone directory yellow pages.

Before your license may be issued, you must document compliance with building codes by submitting a report issued by the inspector to the Department of Commerce and the regional licensing specialist.

6. Determine whether you will obtain liability insurance for your family day care center and if additional insurance is necessary to transport children in your care.
7. Develop written policies and procedures for staff and for distribution to parents regarding:
 - ◆ Admission and discharge of enrolled children.
 - ◆ Fees charged including refunds.
 - ◆ Health care (including SIDS risk reduction procedures).
 - ◆ Nutrition.
 - ◆ Daily activities of children.
 - ◆ Child guidance techniques.
 - ◆ Child and provider absence policy.
 - ◆ Religious instruction or practices, if any.
 - ◆ Information about liability insurance you may have on your operation.
 - ◆ Transportation of children.

A written contract between you and the parent is recommended.

You can obtain an example of this written information, including the *"Back to Sleep"* brochure and sample contracts, by contacting the Child Care Information Center at 1-800-362-7353.

8. Develop an orientation policy for an occasional substitute provider and any helpers or employees you may have. This policy should include:
 - ◆ Names and ages of children in care.
 - ◆ Current arrival and departure information for each child enrolled including the names of people authorized to pick up the child.
 - ◆ Location of children's emergency contact information.
 - ◆ Specific information relating to children's special health care needs including medications, disabilities or special health conditions.
 - ◆ Procedures to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) if the center is licensed to care for children under 1 year of age.
 - ◆ An overview of the daily schedule including meals, snacks, nap and any information related to the eating and sleep schedules of infants and toddlers enrolled in the center.
 - ◆ A review of the center's policies and procedures including guiding children's behavior.
 - ◆ A review of the center's procedures for dealing with emergencies.
 - ◆ The procedure for reporting suspected child abuse and/or neglect.

All employees, helpers and occasional substitute providers must have an orientation completed prior to working with the children. Documentation of the orientation shall be maintained in the provider's record.

9. Develop an orientation policy for an emergency back-up provider who may care for children in the event that you must respond to a family or medical emergency. This policy should include:
 - ◆ Names and ages of all children in care.
 - ◆ Arrival and departure for each child in care including the names of people authorized to pick up children.
 - ◆ Information on SIDS risk reduction procedures utilized for children under 1 year of age.
 - ◆ Location of children's files.
10. If your facility is not served by a public water system, request a well inspection and water test for bacteria by the Department of Natural Resources. Include a nitrate test if you will be caring for infants under the age of six months.
11. Obtain the necessary forms to be completed by parents including a child enrollment and health history, immunization record, child health report, and the infant - toddler intake form for children under age 2. Contact your WCCIP TA to obtain the order form for requesting all necessary forms. A number of forms are available on the Internet at the DHFS/DCFS/BRL home page www.dhfs.state.wi.us/rl_dcfs/INDEX.HTM.

12. Obtain a physical exam, including a TB test, unless you have had one in the past year.
13. Under the licensing rules, you will need at least 40 hours of training approved by the Department or 3 credits in Early Childhood Education. If you intend to care for children under two years of age, you will also need to complete at least ten hours of DHFS approved infant / toddler care training.

NOTE: If you plan on serving children under 1 year of age in your program, you will need to obtain either the Infant/Toddler course or the complete Family Day Care course **prior** to becoming licensed. These courses provide the training on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome that is required of all licensees prior to caring for children under 1 year of age.

It is recommended that you complete all required training prior to becoming licensed; however, you have six months after obtaining your license to complete these courses (with the exception of the SIDS training that is required prior to caring for children under age 1, as noted above).

Courses may be taken through the technical college system or UW system. If you wish to take an entry-level class offered by an agency not affiliated with a technical college or university, check with The Registry at (608) 222-1123 or www.the-registry.org before enrolling to verify the class has received DHFS approval as meeting entry-level training requirements.

14. Obtain equipment and furnishings. A list of suggested equipment can be obtained from the Child Care Information Center at 1-800-362-7353.
15. Determine which areas will be used by the children, and make sure that the center is free of hazards. During the initial site visit, the licensing specialist will inspect the entire premises, including areas that you will not be using for day care, to ensure that children will be safe and that you have removed any hazards. Please allow a minimum of 2 hours for the initial visit; it may take longer depending upon your readiness for licensure.
16. Complete an HFS-64 Background Information Disclosure form and submit it to the regional office when you submit your application. Any household members aged 10 years and older will also need to complete a Background Information Disclosure form to be submitted with your license application. The regional office will complete a background check on all applicants for licensure and adult household residents. Minors under age 18 will not need to have a complete background check unless the Department determines a complete check is required. A "Yes" answer to any question in sections A or B of the Background Information Disclosure form may preclude you from obtaining a license. Required background checks will be completed at the time of initial licensure and every four years thereafter. Consult your WCCIP TA for more information about the background check process.
17. **After you have completed working with the WCCIP, you are not yet licensed** and will need to submit the following items to the regional office serving your area (see enclosed listing) in order to become licensed:
 - ◆ CFS-2241 Family Child Care Initial Licensing Checklist completed by the WCCIP TA. You will need to complete the applicant section of the Family Child Care Initial Licensing Checklist not more than 14 days prior to submitting your application.
 - ◆ Completed CFS-67 Family Day Care License Application available from your WCCIP TA.
 - ◆ Completed HFS-64 Background Information Disclosure forms for yourself and anyone aged 10 years and over living in your home.
 - ◆ Written policy information to share with parents.
 - ◆ Any other items specified in the CFS-2241 Family Child Care Initial Licensing Checklist.
 - ◆ One check or money order made payable to the Division of Children and Family Services. See item 20 below to determine the total amount you must submit.
18. **Allow 60 days after the submission of all application materials (including fees) as a projected opening date** to allow for a complete review by your licensing specialist, including results from required background checks {see HFS 45.08(1)(b)1.}.

To avoid unnecessary delays in the licensing process, it is important that you have met all applicable items in the CFS-2241 Family Child Care Initial Licensing Checklist **before** the application is submitted and the Department schedules the initial site visit. If the licensing specialist makes a visit and you are not in compliance with all applicable requirements of HFS 45, you will not receive a license.

Items not in compliance with the licensing rules will be identified and you will be instructed to request another initial licensing study when all items have been met. When you notify the Department to schedule another visit, the Department will attempt to make a visit within 20 working days, but it may take longer depending upon regional workload. If you are not in compliance after 2 visits, your application for a license may be denied because you do not meet the requirements for a license.

If the Department does not hear from you within 6 months after receiving your application or after the first initial licensing study was completed, your application will be closed and you will need to reapply.

19. A licensing fee of \$60.50 is charged every two years. Your fee for the first six-month probationary license is \$15.12. The table in Item 20 will help you to calculate the total amount of the check or money order you are to submit with the application. If you submit an application and later decide not to complete the licensing process, your fees will not be refunded if the licensing specialist has made an on-site inspection.
20. The check or money order should be made payable to the Division of Children and Family Services. To determine the total amount of the check or money order, use the following calculations:

\$ 15.12	Licensing fee for six-month probationary period.
+ \$ _____	\$7.50 X _____ (number of adult HFS-64s completed per Item 16).
\$ _____	Total amount of check or money order.

21. Licenses are not transferable. If you move, you must contact your licensing specialist at least 30 days before you move. You will need to submit a new application and fees. No credit will be given for fees at your prior location.
22. You are required to do a background check through the Department of Justice on all employees including substitute caregivers, persons who are contracted by you or compensated by other sources, student teachers and volunteers used to meet staff-to-child ratios. Refer to PFS-3064 Requirements for Background Checks for Family Day Care Centers for information on how to conduct a background check on a prospective employee. A copy is available from your WCCIP TA. You will not be able to complete a full background check on an employee until after you have been issued a license and have a facility ID number. You must have the employee complete the HFS-64 Background Information Disclosure form upon hire. S/he may begin working under general supervision until you get the full results provided the Background Information Disclosure indicates no crime, act or offense was committed that would bar the person from working in a day care facility. You have 60 days after initial licensure or from the date of hire to obtain the results from the background check.

Contact your WCCIP TA or licensing specialist if you have questions regarding the background check process.

23. Under the authority of s. 48.73, Wis. Stats., the Department must be granted unrestricted access to your premises for the purpose of monitoring your compliance with the licensing rules. If you fail to allow access to a Department representative, the Department shall take enforcement action against your license under s. 48.715, Wis. Stats., including issuance of orders, forfeitures or revocation of your license. In addition, if the Department is unable to monitor for compliance or verify correction of licensing violations, it may affect your eligibility to receive child care subsidy payments pursuant to DWD 56.04(7)(c).